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TEACHING THE "TOUGH TOPICS" --CONSIDERATIONS IN AND APPROACHES TO CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE ISSUES

Betty Lou Barsley-Marra*

ABSTRACT:

Many of us learned that there are just some topics that should not be discussed because they are likely to elicit strong emotions. Some educators believe that controversy in an educational setting hinders thinking and learning. The result of this is that educators, all too often, exclude "tough topics" from their programs. For Extension to achieve its mission, there must be staff who are highly skilled for educating on the "tough topics." They must provide leadership for all who work with children, youth and families regarding the importance of embracing the "tough topics" since ignorance results in the lack of health and wellness literacy as well as the lack of resistance skills evident in poor behavioral choices. The poor behavioral choices made by adolescents, for example, have many results including unintended pregnancy, exposure and transmission of sexually transmitted infections, and interpersonal relationship havoc such as victimization and the inability to sustain healthy human connections. This workshop will enhance the skills of those who work with children, youth and their families regarding education on the "tough topics." While discussion will be applicable to all "tough topics," human sexuality education will be the topic addressed most specifically in terms of strategies and approaches. Included in the workshop will be a simulation of an educational program on Transgender Issues. As the workshop audience participates in that simulation they will simultaneously be learning information about the topic while observing the modeling of best practice in teaching of a "tough topic."

*Extension Educator Family Life, Chicago Center, Chicago, IL
Email: barsmarr@uiuc.edu

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: FUN AND GAMES OR SERIOUS STRATEGIES?

Holly Berry*, Betty Izumi, Sharon Johnson, Suzi Busler, Fern Wilcox, Anne Hoisington, Carolyn Raab, Cecelia Haack and Elaine Husted

ABSTRACT:

Interactive, experiential teaching tools enable participants to experience a "hands on" scenario through engagement in challenges and choices. Participants are more likely to gain cognitive and affective understandings from experiential learning than from traditional teaching techniques. Although there is any number of commercially produced educational games and simulations available for purchase, they may not achieve your specific educational objectives. You may have to produce your own. Effective concept design, development, and evaluation doesn't just happen. Educational objectives and outcomes, the physical environment, allocation of time, and incorporation of chance and excitement are just a few of the elements that contribute to a real-life experience for the participant. Extension faculty and staff in Oregon have designed and delivered a variety of effective experiential teaching tools that engage program participants in specific subject matter topics and public policy issues. In some cases, familiar formats have been utilized and adapted; in others, original design was necessary. Components of a diabetes bingo/loteria game in English and Spanish, a food safety education board game for Native Americans, a community development board game for community based youth development program managers, a simulation for families with young children who have special needs, and a community based learning activity to increase awareness of hunger will be explored. This session identifies the steps from start to finish that will lead to designing a successful interactive learning experience in family education.

*Extension Faculty, Family and Community Development, OSU Extension Service
Salem, OR

Email: holly.berry@oregonstate.edu

NEW-AGE PRESENTATIONS FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS

Susan Busler* and Nellie Oehler

ABSTRACT:

Extension educators are supposed to be teachers but many of us have never taken a speech or an educational principles class. If we have, it was a decade ago and things have changed. There is more to teaching than putting your outline up on a screen. This class will teach the principles of effective presentations, including how to make attractive visuals, whether it is an overhead, PowerPoint presentation or the plain "ole" flip chart. The class will include information on different learning styles and teaching diverse audiences. Do you know how to reach those with limited literacy skills, hearing and sight impaired, and those with learning disabilities? Many times we are not even aware of limitations of our audience and just go in with a prepared presentation and wonder why half the class "Just doesn't get it" or falls asleep. Are your educational programs organized in such a way to receive high ratings on the teacher evaluation forms? If we are to engage a wide range of individuals in our educational programs we need to use creative and innovative teaching techniques. This class will include a variety of teaching tips and help you organize your educational programs to meet the needs of today's Extension clientele and keep them coming back for more.

*Family & Community Development Faculty, Eugene, OR

Email: susan.busler@oregonstate.edu

4-H SURVIVOR CAMP-AN EXPERIENCE IN LIVING ON YOUR OWN

Janice Cowan*, Carole Smith and Deb Schreiber

ABSTRACT:

4-H Survivor Camp is a winter weekend camp held at a rustic camping facility in rural Eastern Oregon. The camp was developed to meet an identified need: training in basic life skills for youth transitioning from high school to adult life. 4-H Survivor Camp simulates real-to-life activities for teens in order to: (1) provide creative educational strategies; (2) allow for different learning styles of youth and (3) provide a creative positive learning environment for practical and social development. Youth spend a weekend living with roommates in an "apartment" setting. Activities include finding an apartment through newspapers, negotiating with a landlord, budgeting a paycheck, paying bills, cooking meals, and dealing with a crisis. Youth participate in mock job interviews with local business men, learn to write a creative resume, discuss with college alumni what it's like to live with roommates. A pre-post evaluation paired sampling test showed a "significant" change in their knowledge of budgeting paychecks, interviewing for jobs, renting an apartment, and dealing with crisis situations. This poster will share the objectives of the program, methods used to deliver the knowledge and skills gained and the results/impact of the program.

*OSU 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent, Baker, OR

Email: janice.cowan@orst.edu

"TAG - YOU'RE IN!"

Michael Hauser* and Bryan Chadd

ABSTRACT:

Reflect on your childhood. The air is filled with shouts of "Tag--You're It!" Reflecting on that scene, are you reminded of the slowest kid chasing the faster kids around the neighborhood with no hope of ever tagging another player. The final scene plays out when the "it" kid states that "this game is no fun and quits". Upon analyzation, the old game of Tag--You're It really camouflaged the game of Tag--You're Out. Observers would see the game was based upon the goal of selecting the slowest person to ensure the others would succeed. Cooperation and communication existed only among the faster players and solving his problem was an impossibility for the slower player. The field of Experiential Education is based on many premises and principles. Five principles of successful experiential programming are active engagement, cooperation, problem solving, communication, and goal setting. These five principles are inherent in tag games that are more reflective of "Tag--You're In," than "Tag--You're Out!" Experiential Educators are accustomed to processing experiences utilizing the feedback strategy of asking "What, So What and Now What" questions. This workshop will focus on the "Now What" question to address relevant youth development issues. By presenting over 30 tag games, we will process the issues of character development, playing fair, active engagement, finding commonalities among our differences, decision making, solving problems, trust and support. Sound simple—it is. Profound? It can be if you change "Tag--You're Out" to "Tag--You're In" with your youth.

*Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, St. Johns, AZ
Email: mhauser@ag.arizona.edu

MANAGING ON THE EDGE OF CHANGE: STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THOSE WHO SUPERVISE OTHERS

Joyce R. McDowell M.S.* and Mary E. W. Kershaw

ABSTRACT:

Managing on the Edge of Change is a three part video tape series, targeted to individuals who supervise paraprofessionals. Each segment discusses one of the following topics; hiring, supervising and coaching, and evaluation and documentation. Each segment discusses the best management practices that will help a supervisor hire the best person to fit the job description as well as enhance the work environment. Management experts provide management tips in each of the three video tapes. The session will provide an overview of each of the segments as well as practical techniques of utilizing the series will be discussed. The series can be used as a total package or each video as a stand alone program. As part of the package a participant handbook is included. The handbook is designed to provide additional examples of the ideas about hiring, supervising and coaching and evaluating and documentation presented in the video tapes series. This is a must have management tool if you are supervising paraprofessionals. The series was developed by the North Central Region Assistant Directors and State Leaders of Extension Family and Consumer Sciences and Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, Midwest Region and Mountain Plains Region Food and Nutrition Service, USDA through Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The series was produced by Ohio State University Extension.

*Interim Assistant Director, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University
Extension, Columbus, OH
Email: mcdowell.1@osu.edu

GAMES! GAMES! GAMES!

Sage Platt M.A.* and Craig Dart, M.S.

ABSTRACT:

The Youth and Families with Promise Mentoring Program (YFP) was designed and implemented through Utah State University Extension to address youth problems through early intervention with youth, ages 10-14 and their families. Through quantitative and qualitative research it was evident that families and youth needed to improve skills encompassing good communication, goal orientation, problem solving, and play. To address this issue, program youth, their families and mentors participate in experiential group activity nights and service projects. The monthly activities are thematic and structured from therapeutic adventure and active learning models and are based on the "40 Assets" as identified by the Search Institute. The volunteers and trained staff of each organization participate and facilitate the learning activities. Through this interaction, mentors support the parent(s) and assist in the development of strong family bonds, better communication, and clear family rules. Testing shows that the parent(s) also gain in knowledge of parenting skills. Activity nights are structured with icebreakers and initiatives labeled as problem-solving or quick physical activities. The rules are outlined for participation and the processing or debriefing follows. This Seminar will help the participants understand and experience how learning activities and games build skills and strengthen relationships. Participants will learn the theoretical foundations for structured active games in a large group setting and will participate in a wide variety of proven experiential activities designed to help families and youth develop strong family bonds, better communication and improve family relations. Research data will also be available to participants.

*Youth and Families with Promise State Coordinator, Utah State University Extension,
Cedar, UT
Email: sagep@ext.usu.edu

HEALTHY LUNCH: A WAY TO MODEL AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO CLIENTS WANTING TO MAKE NUTRITIONAL LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Elisa Shackelton*

ABSTRACT:

This is a monthly lunch program being offered as part of the Moffat County Healthy People 2010 grant initiative. Each month a set of 8-10 healthful and quick to prepare recipes are selected and a recipe booklet is created for approximately 15-20 participants to take home following the 1-hour program. Upon arrival, participants wash their hands, don aprons, and are divided into cooking groups. Each group of participants prepares one recipe from the booklet, having it ready for a buffet-style lunch within 20-30 minutes. When all recipes are prepared, everyone goes through the buffet line and then sits down together to eat. Recipes are reviewed and comments shared regarding palatability, ease of preparation, nutritional value, etc. Evaluation is done using a survey instrument that is completed at the end of each program asking which, if any, recipes the participants plan to prepare at home, and if they are making healthier food choices and/or overall dietary changes as a result of participation in the Healthy Lunch program. (Feedback has been phenomenal with almost 100% of participants making permanent dietary changes and using the new recipes to replace old, less-healthy ones from their repertoire of family favorites.)

*CSU Cooperative Extension, Moffat County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent,
CSU Moffat County Cooperative Extension Office, Craig, CO
Email: eshackel@coop.ext.colostate.edu

COMMUNICATING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

Beverly J. Stencel* and Hans Hanson

ABSTRACT:

Organizations, including Extension systems, are facing the challenge of bringing together people from four generations to meet group goals. Each generation brings diverse perspectives, values, needs, and expectations. Learning to blend the distinctive creative energies and accommodate the different styles of these four generations creates a dynamic team. Helping individuals from divergent generations develop skills that enable them to appreciate their differences greatly enhances task efficiency, effectiveness and enjoyment. The goals of our curriculum is to (1) increase knowledge and understanding of the four generations; (2) enhance comprehension of how generational differences affect you; (3) promote skills for effective intergenerational communication; (4) expand capacity to manage diverse generational working styles. The program was designed to help participants recognize the qualifiers that define a generation; and identify forces that shaped their attitudes, beliefs, and expectations, and influence how they see the world. Participants explore what motivates individuals from each generation, their differing communication styles, and learn skills and strategies to meet diverse needs. Past program participants, including staff of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and University of Wisconsin-Extension, have found "Communicating Across the Generations" relevant and meaningful in meeting this challenge. This curriculum is designed to be fun, flexible and easy to use. It contains cutting-edge information, small and large group work, and activities that encourage individual reflection. The Wisconsin Extension Community Development Association awarded Hanson and Stencel their 2002 Quality of Teaching Award for "Communicating Across the Generations".

*Professor Department of Community Development, University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension, Spooner, WI
Email: beverly.stencel@ces.uwex.edu

RE-ENERGIZING LEARNING AFTER SCHOOL

Pat Whitaker* and Jill Martz

ABSTRACT:

Providing a safe, healthy and enriching environment for youth after the normal school day has become a national initiative in 4-H youth development. Learning experiences that enhance life skills, are engaging and stimulating at the end of a school day is a challenge to educators. This seminar will enhance the tool kit for Extension Professionals looking for creative ways to stimulate learning in a 4-H Club, special interest group or an after-school setting. Participants will have the opportunity to experience the best of the 4-H B.E.S.T (Building Esteem through Science and Technology) curriculum, receive samples of units based on the experiential learning model and gain new ways to facilitate learning through hands-on projects. Participants have evaluated this program through triangular studies, pre/post tests and interviews. Positive youth development is enhanced when youth are engaged in meaningful experiences throughout the school day. This seminar will focus on those needs and give solutions that will enhance any after-school program.

*Area 4-H Specialist, Nashville, TN

Email: pwhitaker@utk.edu